

Testimony of (Daniel Coppinger of (Simsbury) in support of
H.B. No. 7243 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY SAFETY
AND SECURITY POLICIES.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
11:00 AM 2E

Chairman Verrengia, Chairwoman Bradley, Vice Chair Paolillo, Vice Chair Osten, Ranking Member Sredinski, Ranking Member Hwang and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, for the record my name is Daniel Coppinger from Simsbury, Connecticut and I am offering this testimony in support of HB 7243.

Thank you for holding this public hearing and the opportunity to submit testimony here today. I would particularly like to thank State Representatives Joseph Verrengia of West Hartford and John Hampton of Simsbury for allowing me to present this written testimony on this important matter.

As a law enforcement official and parent of three teenagers, I need to make you aware of some serious problems with the Uber and Lyft transportation services.

Several months ago, a Juvenile, was threatening suicide and ran away from home. He used a stolen credit card to take an Uber cab out of state into Rhode Island at 10:00 at night. About a 100 mile drive from the Farmington Valley.

Through records obtained by parents several days after this emergency, they were able to see that the Uber driver was driving up to 85 MPH in a 65MPH zone with a suicidal juvenile in the car.

Neither the police, nor anyone was able to contact Uber to obtain any information on the location of the operator, how to contact the operator, a description of the vehicle the operator was driving or to notify the driver of this emergency (suicidal Juvenile) that the operator had a juvenile passenger that was in crisis. Parents and police tried for several hours to contact Uber but were unable to speak with anyone.

In this case, a missing person entry was made by police for Connecticut and Rhode Island. The juvenile was found by a Rhode Island police officer at approximately 1:00am the following morning, alive but still suicidal. The juvenile was returned back to Connecticut where he was admitted to the Connecticut Children's Hospital.

A day after the juvenile was released from the hospital, he once again ran away and used an Uber to go to Rhode Island. Again, Uber did not provide any immediate assistance to law enforcement or the parents that would be helpful in these exigent circumstances. The Juvenile was found a day later and committed to a hospital.

1. There are no phone numbers to contact and speak with a representative of Uber or Lyft for exigent emergencies. Both companies do offer a phone number but it is a recording of options, which refer the caller to send an e-mail or leave a message. This process is time consuming and does not provide immediate results for law enforcement.

2. Additionally, Uber has a policy that they will not transport juveniles but they do not enforce this. I have spoken to over a dozen Uber drivers and Juveniles about these procedures. The Uber drivers I spoke with ALL said they do not ask for ID from any of their passengers including ones they think are teenagers. The juveniles I spoke with ALL said that they have never been asked for their ID. Some of the juveniles said that they use a friends Uber account to get rides and then pay back the friend for the cost of the ride.

This incident is only one of numerous examples of why some of the current policy and procedures of these companies do not work. Many parents and law enforcement officers have shared their concern and additional examples. These companies need better regulation and there must be a system in place in times of emergency that the police can locate/contact an Uber/Lyft driver, as cab companies are required. They must be held accountable. This is a matter of public safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration in passing this important legislation.